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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/48/724)]

48/188. International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

The General Assembly,

Expressing its support to all countries that have suffered a heavy loss of human life, as well as serious damage, both material and economic, as a result of natural disasters,

Recalling its resolutions 44/236 of 22 December 1989, in which it proclaimed the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and 46/182 of 19 December 1991, in the annex to which it called for substantive improvements in international humanitarian emergency assistance and which led to the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat,

Recalling also its resolution 46/149 of 18 December 1991, in which it endorsed the convening in 1994 of a world conference of representatives of national committees for the Decade,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council decision 1993/328 of 30 July 1993 on the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction,

Recognizing the important contribution the Decade can make to the improvement of emergency management in general and to capacity-building for disaster preparedness and mitigation at the national level,

Emphasizing the important role of professional and other non-governmental organizations, particularly scientific and technological societies, humanitarian groups and investment institutions, in the implementation of programmes and activities of the Decade,

Having considered the 12-point Plan of Action for the Conference, adopted by the Special High-Level Council on the Decade at its second session, 1/

Having also considered the recommendations made by the Secretary-General with the purpose of providing guidance for the continuing implementation of the Decade and the effective preparation and convening of the Conference,

Recognizing the close interrelationship between disaster prevention and sustainable development, which was already recognized at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and taken account of in chapter 7, section F, of Agenda 21, 2/

Convinced that each country bears the primary responsibility for protecting its people, infrastructure and other national assets from the impact of natural disasters,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the Decade, 3/ which contains, inter alia, the second annual report of the Scientific and Technical Committee on the Decade, 4/

1. Commends those countries exposed to disasters that have already taken initiatives to reduce their vulnerability, encourages them to continue, in the context of their socio-economic process, with the implementation of natural disaster mitigation policies during the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, taking into account the targets for progress in disaster reduction defined by the Scientific and Technical Committee on the Decade, 5/ and also encourages them to pursue the possibilities of regional cooperation within the framework of the Decade;

2. Encourages the members of the Special High-Level Council on the Decade, on the basis of the advice they have provided to the Secretary-General, to embark actively, individually and as a group on measures to increase public awareness of the potential for disaster reduction and raise support for the activities of the Decade from Governments, international financing institutions and other funding organizations, and the business community;

1/ A/48/219-E/1993/97, annex.

2/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), vol. I, Resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution I, annex II.

3/ A/48/219-E/1993/97 and Add.1.

4/ A/48/219/Add.1-E/1993/97/Add.1, annex.

5/ See A/46/266/Add.1-E/1991/106/Add.1, annex II, sect. IV.A.

3. Commends the Scientific and Technical Committee for the work accomplished in 1992, and endorses its proposals for the preparations for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction;

4. Calls upon Member States and all other participants in the Decade to participate actively in the financial and technical support of Decade activities, including those of the secretariat of the Decade;

5. Calls upon the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, of which the secretariat of the Decade has become an integral part, to continue to bring closer together the operational and promotional efforts in disaster preparedness and mitigation, thus paving the way for the successful attainment of the goals and objectives of the Decade;

6. Decides to convene in 1994 the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in 1994 with the following objectives:

(a) To review the accomplishments of the Decade at the national, regional and international levels;

(b) To chart a programme of action for the future;

(c) To exchange information on the implementation of Decade programmes and policies;

(d) To increase awareness of the importance of disaster reduction policies;

7. Accepts with deep appreciation the generous offer of the Government of Japan to host the World Conference, and decides that the Conference will be held at Yokohama, Japan, from 23 to 27 May 1994;

8. Decides to establish a Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, which will meet for five days at Geneva, no later than March 1994, to review organizational and substantive preparations for the Conference, approve the programme of work of the Conference and propose rules of procedure for adoption by the Conference, on the basis of recommendations submitted by the secretariat of the Decade, after consultation with the host country;

9. Requests the secretariat of the Decade to serve as the secretariat of the Conference and to coordinate preparatory activities, in close cooperation with the host Government and the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, with the full support of relevant departments and offices of the United Nations Secretariat;

10. Recognizes the importance of broad and multidisciplinary participation in the Conference and, to this end, requests the Secretary-General to invite to the Conference all States, national committees for the Decade, and organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as the intergovernmental organizations and scientific associations concerned, relevant non-governmental organizations and the private sector;

11. Calls upon all Governments to take an active part in the Conference and its preparatory process, in particular by:

(a) Undertaking systematic assessments of national and local hazards and risks, with the assistance of the intersectoral national committees for the Decade;

(b) Organizing multidisciplinary national and regional conferences and technical meetings, so as to ensure that the entire potential of each country, both at the national level and within the context of regional cooperation, including its scientific and technical capability, is fully utilized in disaster reduction;

(c) Preparing comprehensive reports on progress achieved and plans for further action to be presented at the Conference;

12. Calls upon all United Nations bodies and specialized agencies to participate actively in the Conference, as well as its preparatory process, and commends those organizations which, in line with the open and participatory nature of the Decade, have assumed responsibility for the organization of technical committees at the Conference;

13. Decides that the preparatory process and the Conference itself should be funded through existing budgetary resources, without negatively affecting programmed activities, and through voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund established for the Decade;

14. Requests the Secretary-General to appeal to all Member States to contribute generously to the Trust Fund with a view to financing the additional activities required in preparing for and holding the Conference;

15. Expresses its deep appreciation to those countries that have provided generous support for the activities of the Decade by making voluntary contributions to its Trust Fund, making available scientific and technical knowledge, developing and implementing innovative disaster reduction projects and hosting activities or meetings of importance to the Decade;

16. Also expresses its deep appreciation to those national committees and focal points for the Decade that have participated actively in the process of attaining the goals and objectives of the Decade;

17. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session a report on progress made in the implementation of the present resolution, including the findings of the mid-term review of the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, to be carried out by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1994.

86th plenary meeting
21 December 1993